

## Plenary round-up – Strasbourg, November I 2017

The key focal points of the November I plenary session included debates on the rule of law in Malta and Poland and on the 'Paradise papers' revelations. Members adopted, inter alia, their positions ahead of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference and the Eastern Partnership Summit. They also adopted resolutions on the new EU-Africa strategy and on the Ombudsman's activities in 2016. Parliament heard a formal address from Andrej Kiska, President of Slovakia, and finally, the 2017 LUX Prize was awarded at a ceremony held on Wednesday.

### Paradise papers

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists' recent revelations, known as the '[Paradise papers](#),' were the subject of Council and Commission statements. Parliament's Inquiry Committee into Money Laundering, Tax Evasion and Tax Avoidance (PANA) is due to report on its work following the ICIJ's previous, 'Panama papers', exposé during the December session. The 'Paradise papers' are certain to lead to redoubled EU efforts to clamp down on practices involving offshore interests and tax evasion and avoidance.

### Multilateral negotiations in view of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference

With the WTO Ministerial Conference to convene in Buenos Aires from 10-13 December 2017, Members adopted a resolution on [multilateral negotiations in view of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference](#), confirming Parliament's commitment to multilateralism. Some of the main priorities for discussion at the ministerial conference are fisheries subsidies, agriculture negotiations, and domestic regulation of service providers.

### Rule of law in Malta and Poland

The Parliament debated the situation of the rule of law in Malta after the Council and Commission made statements. In the [resolution](#) (adopted by 466 votes to 49, with 167 abstentions) Members called upon the Commission to begin dialogue on the rule of law with Malta, and to look at its application of the existing rules to tackle money laundering.

Following a debate with the Council and Commission, Members adopted (by 438 votes to 152, with 71 abstentions) a [resolution](#) calling on the Polish government to comply with the European Commission's recommendations on respect for the rule of law. The EU could launch the Article 7 TEU procedure should the Polish government fail to respect these recommendations.

### Recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation

Members largely supported the proposed directive on the recognition of professional qualifications for inland waterways. The complicated system of national professional qualifications is thought to deter young people from working in the sector. The text agreed in trilogue on rules on the [recognition of qualifications in inland navigation](#) seeks to harmonise the rules, to attract more young people to take up jobs in the sector.

*Listen to podcast '[Professional qualifications in inland navigation](#)'.*

### Cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws

The European Parliament approved, by a large majority, the agreement reached in trilogue on 22 June on the proposed regulation to update and reinforce [cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws](#). The EU wants to strengthen the current system of alerts and mutual assistance to deal with problems encountered in cross-border shopping online. The rules approved will give national authorities more powers to investigate and enforce the law.



## Protection against dumped and subsidised imports from non-EU countries

Protection against dumped and subsidised imports from China and other third countries is vital for many EU industries. When China's WTO Accession Protocol expired in 2016, the EU moved to ensure [protection against dumped and subsidised imports from countries not members of the EU](#), using trade defence instruments to address problems such as over-capacity. Consequently, the EU institutions reached agreement on a revised Anti-Dumping Regulation to protect EU businesses from these unfair trading practices. Members discussed and adopted the text agreed with the Council in trilogue, with a large majority.

## Relations with New Zealand

The EU-New Zealand Partnership Agreement signed on 5 October 2016 was referred to the Parliament for consent. Following a debate, Parliament, [consented](#) to the conclusion of the Agreement, and also adopted a [resolution](#) focusing on the common values shared by the EU and New Zealand, their strong and longstanding economic and cultural ties and their reliable cooperation, both bilateral and within international fora.

## Eastern Partnership: November 2017 Summit

Parliament adopted its position in advance of the Eastern Partnership Summit, scheduled for 24 November 2017. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, launched in 2009, and encompassing the EU, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In their [resolution](#), Members insist on giving new dynamism to the EaP, differentiating between partners depending on their willingness for greater EU cooperation, assisting civil society, implementing the Association Agreements in place, visa liberalisation, and the new 'EaP+' model.

## Activities of the European Ombudsman in 2016

Parliament held a debate on the report on the [European Ombudsman's activities during 2016](#). The Ombudsman conducts inquiries into cases of maladministration by EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. The resolution underlines that complaints against the EU institutions fell slightly in 2016, with transparency-related issues and access to information and documents the top subject matter for complaints.

## The EU-Africa Strategy: a boost for development

Given the dynamic demographic growth in Africa, young people will be the focus of the next summit of EU and African Heads of State or Government, which takes place at the end of November in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). The Parliament adopted a resolution defining its position on a new relationship to replace the ten-year old Africa-EU Joint Strategy. The [new priorities for EU-Africa cooperation](#) include a focus on human development, particularly for employment and education for the young, good governance, and human rights

*Listen to podcast '[New priorities for EU–Africa cooperation](#)'.*

## Opening of trilogue negotiations

The Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs Committee decision to enter into trilogue negotiations on the proposal regarding criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person was approved, following a vote in plenary. Negotiating mandates adopted by the LIBE committee on three further proposals were confirmed [unopposed](#).

## LUX Prize 2017

On 14 November, the LUX Film Prize for 2017 was awarded to the film *Sami Blood*, a story about a Sami girl from the north of Sweden, who overcomes prejudice against her people in her quest to become a teacher.

*This 'at a glance' note is intended to review some of the highlights of the plenary part-session, and notably to follow up on key dossiers identified by EPRS. It does not aim to be exhaustive. For more detailed information on specific files, please see other EPRS products, notably our 'EU legislation in progress' briefings, and the plenary [minutes](#).*